

VZCZCXRO0961
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #1118/01 0901712
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 311712Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0481
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001118

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#) [TU](#) [JA](#) [SA](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: SUNNI VP HASHIMI DISCUSSES RECENT TRAVEL,
DE-BA,ATHIFICATION

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel Speckhard per 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting with the DCM on March 30, Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi discussed his recent travel to Japan, Jordan, and Turkey. He cited Japan's extension of its law authorizing its air force mission in Iraq as a major success of the trip. Hashimi said that he gave President Jalal Talabani the authority to negotiate the draft de-Ba'athification law while he was traveling. He had not read the final draft of the law and did not know that it was signed by the President and Prime Minister, rather than the Presidency Council. Nevertheless, he said the Sunnis "have no objection" to a reformed de-Ba'athification law. Hashimi said Tawafuq's desire to replace Minister of Defense Abdalkader al-Mufriji is becoming a key issue in the Cabinet reshuffle. He expressed frustration with the lack of deliverables he is able to show his constituency and said he perceives a lack of support from the United States. He said a timetable for Coalition withdrawal should be contingent on reforming the Iraqi Security Forces or there would be a security vacuum. END SUMMARY.

Trips to Japan, Jordan, and Turkey

12. (C) Hashimi said he had just returned from three days in Japan, two days in Jordan, and one day in Turkey on official visits. He said the Turks are worried about the PKK and are sensitive about Kirkuk. He said Jordanian King Abdullah was frustrated with the instability in Iraq. In Japan, Hashimi said he met with numerous policymakers to help drum up support for Tokyo's commitment to Iraq. Hashimi cited Japan's extension of legislation that authorizes its air force mission to Iraq as a success of the trip. He also praised Japan for training some 1,400 Iraqi engineers and technicians to work in Iraq's oil sector.

13. (C) Hashimi said he was surprised by Saudi King Abdullah's statement at the Arab League Summit calling the US presence in Iraq an "illegitimate foreign occupation." Hashimi thought the remark was aimed at King Abdullah's domestic audience and questioned the DCM as to how much the Saudi government is doing to counter Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The DCM said that while it appears the Saudi government is against AQI, it is not taking enough action against the group.

No Objections So Far to De-Ba'athification

14. (C) Hashimi said he spoke with President Talabani while he was in Tokyo and authorized him to negotiate on his behalf regarding the Presidency Council's version of a draft de-Ba'athification law. He did not know that the draft ultimately was negotiated and signed as an initiative from the President and Prime Minister, and he had not read the

draft released to the public, although poloffs had sent his staff a copy in Arabic. Nevertheless, Hashimi said he had no objection to de-Ba'athification and commented that it was the Shia that would have objections.

Frustration with MOD, United States

¶15. (C) In the middle of the conversation on de-Ba'athification, Hashimi became distracted when one of his staff delivered him a note saying the office of the head of the Sunni Endowment was being raided by the Iraqi Army, and asked for the US to investigate the incident. (Note: MNF-I later confirmed that IA cordoned off an area that contained the Sunni Endowment office, but no one associated with the Endowment was detained.) Later in the meeting, when asked about a Cabinet reshuffle, Hashimi said the Tawafuq wants to change MOD Abdulkader and is frustrated that Tawafuq cannot do so even though the bloc nominated him. Hashimi insisted that changing Abdulkader would not affect the management of the Baghdad Security Plan.

¶16. (C) Hashimi also complained that he was frustrated with the United States. He said it is difficult to save face with his constituency when he cannot deliver on his campaign promises. He stressed that it is difficult to speak out against AQI and to try to bring insurgents into the political process when both groups are getting stronger and his support for the GOI has gotten him nowhere. As usual, he said he felt marginalized from the PM's decision-making. He asked for more support from the United States, citing detainee releases as an example.

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¶17. (C) The DCM pointed out the increased Coalition oversight of the Iraqi security forces (ISF) and the decrease in militia activity as improvements Hashimi could show to the Sunni street. With respect to recent U.S. Congressional bills proposing timetables for withdrawal, Hashimi said a timetable for troop withdrawal should be made after the ISF have been reformed because the ISF are incompetent and insufficient to handle Iraq's problems. He noted that until reforms happen, there would be a security vacuum if Coalition forces left that would lead to civil war. He said the average Sunni does not think the Coalition forces are leaving soon.

¶18. (C) Turning briefly to the Iranian kidnapping of British navy members, Hashimi said he thought Tehran was annoyed at the British in Basrah and was becoming nervous. He said the lack of coordination among Tehran's different governmental organization made Tehran difficult to deal with.

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